Overrides veto

Council taking administration to court

Since City Council alleges it can't obtain a full list of bills the city owes to numerous debtors, members have agreed to take the administration to court in order to find out exactly how much the city is in the red. Councilman James McMyne disclosed the decision to the NEWS at a special Council meeting held last Wednesday afternoon at 3:30, at which Council overrode Mayor Fred Mancuso's veto of their 1983 budget. In effect, Council's budget was adopted. Seven persons attended the meeting, including the news media. Michael Tolerico was re-elected Council president, since this was the annual reorganization meeting.

Councilman Abe Calzola informed the NEWS that he believes the city owes about $230,000 in outstanding bills, and Council overrode the mayor's veto because they felt it wasn't a realistic financial plan, and didn't think the nine-mill tax hike the mayor asked for was necessary. In fact, Council's budget, which retains the 1982 tax levy of 37 mills, is projected to bring in $1,017,645 in revenues and still provide a $36,955 surplus after $985,690 in expenses are paid. Tolerico noted that the surplus can be used to meet bills in any governmental category.

Tolerico commented that Council has no idea of how much money the city owes, but noted that the biggest bills are $120,000 owed to Pennsylvania Power and Light, and $40,000 owed to Price Insurance. "Council can't come up with a realistic budget either if it doesn't know how much money the city owes. And there's no telling how bad the situation can get if we don't find out what's owed," Tolerico said. In a recent press release, Mayor Mancuso pointed out that he did give Council a list of outstanding bills on November 23.

On December 12, the mayor submitted his 1983 budget to Council, and members returned it to him. The original budget called for a ten-mill tax increase. On December 20, the mayor presented his amended budget to Council, and at a special meeting on December 23, Council members rejected Mancuso's financial plan and introduced their own version, without any tax hike. The mayor then vetoed Council's budget on December 30, and at last week's special Council session, the town legislators overrode the veto.

The new budget calls for a 31 mill real estate tax levy and three mill levies each for the sinking fund and recreation fund. Areas funded by general fund revenue, amounting to $985,690 in expenses, include:

Administration - for salaries of elected officials, the mayor, secretary, managing director, city clerk and various expenses such as postage, supplies, auditing, legal services, telephones, advertising and travel ... $62,475.

Financial Administration - for salaries of a director, if one is appointed, three clerks, postage, supplies, equipment and data processing ... $50,900.

Municipal Building - for supplies, utilities and maintenance ... $18,500.

Police - for salaries, training, materials, uniforms and equipment ... $115,140.

Police Vehicles - $10,500.

Fire Protection - for salaries of the chief, drivers, training, materials, uniforms, hydrants and equipment ... $143,000.

Fire Vehicles - $3,500.

Fire Houses - for maintenance and utilities ... $16,000.

Public Works - for salaries, equipment, supplies, vehicle expenses and uniforms ... $105,200.

Garbage Pickup - $123,000.

Meters - for salaries of meterman and repairman and meter parts ... $12,800.

Street Lighting - $85,000.

Insurance - for employees' social security, liability, health, life, union health and welfare, workmen's compensation, and police and firemen's pensions ... $183,000.

Miscellaneous - for codification, fire truck payment, bank loans and county Council of Governments' membership fee ... $48,225.

The federal revenue sharing monies, amounting to $165,000, will be used for police salaries. Liquid fuels revenues, annually given to the city by the state based on population and city street mileage, amounts to $190,000, ($95,000 for both 1982 and 1983) will be used for work on roads, bridges, surface sewers and equipment, and salaries of several DPW workers.

Sinking fund monies, amounting to $74,000, will be used to meet the city's debts, while the recreation fund of $40,050 will be used for recreation department salaries, their payroll taxes and utilities at city parks.

In addition to the collection of real estate taxes and sinking and recreation fund monies, other sources of revenue for the city include collection of delinquent real estate taxes; occupational privilege taxes; real estate transfer taxes; earned income taxes; amusement tax; beverage license; building permits; cable TV; parking tickets; interest income; parking meters; alarm system service; public utility cuts; contract to collect school taxes; state police traffic fines; sale of scrap; miscellaneous; magistrate fees; Public Utility Commission realty taxes; sale of city land; and maintenace of state roads.